Quaker Religious Thought

Quaker Perspectives on the Nature of Man

Wilmer A. Cooper

COMMENTS

By A. Burns Chalmers, Edna M. Hall, and Duane Moon

Volume II, Number 2 75 cents
Autumn 1960

QUAKER RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

Volume II, Number 2 Autumn 1960

Sponsored by the Quaker Theological Discussion Group

Steering Committee

Wilmer A. Cooper, chairman, Edward A. Manice, treasurer, Hugh Barbour, Lewis Benson, Thomas S. Brown, Maurice A. Creasey, Chris Downing, T. Canby Jones, J. Calvin Keene, Arthur O. Roberts, David O. Stanfield, and Charles F. Thomas.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

J. Calvin Keene, *Editor*
Edward A. Manice, *Circulation Mgr.*
O. Theodor Benfey
Lewis Benson
Kenneth Boulding
Thomas S. Brown
Wilmer A. Cooper, *ex officio*
Maurice A. Creasey
Ruth E. Durr
Elsa F. Keene
Duane Moon
Arthur O. Roberts
Douglas V. Steere
Charles F. Thomas

Additional copies of this issue can be obtained by sending 75¢ for each additional copy to Edward A. Manice, 380 Yale Station, New Haven, Conn. Copies of I:1 and I:2 can be obtained from the same address at 50¢ each and copies of II:1 at 75¢ each.

Persons wishing to have their names added to the Quaker Theological Discussion Group can do so by sending $2.00, and those sympathetic to this endeavor are invited to make contributions to it in any amount. These will be gratefully received.

Editorial

As this periodical rounds out the second year of its existence under the sponsorship of the Quaker Theological Discussion Group, with the avowed purpose of exploring "more fully the meaning and implications of our Quaker faith and religious experience," it begins to regard itself not yet as mature but certainly well on the way to adolescence. It seems clear that not only those who were the first members of the Discussion Group but many other Friends and friends of Friends have felt the need to explore the intellectual roots of Quakerism. This exploration has been undertaken not in the mood that the past shall determine the present or the future, but in the hope that we shall come to see ourselves more distinctly (at a time when the meaning of Quakerism has become very indefinite and uncertain) as we understand clearly what we originally represented. Understanding the Quaker heritage of thought will continue to be a major interest of this Journal, but it is expected that the near future will see added to this interest consideration of contemporary concerns, always in line with the original purpose for which this publication was founded.

It is a special pleasure to be able to welcome to these columns a woman contributor, Edna M. Hall, who brings both a British and a feminine touch to the consideration of our theme. The question of man and his nature is in one sense at least the most closely related to us of all theological discussions. We all, more or less consciously, do hold certain views of the kind of beings we men are, and *what* view is held makes a great practical difference in both personal and group relationships. Many Christians in the past have almost rejoiced in the total depravity of man while not a few persons today are convinced that man is "very good" and needs only to be reminded of his inborn perfection. Still others do not know how to regard themselves and their fellows, feeling with Pope that man is the "glory, jest, and riddle of the world." Christian views have generally avoided both extreme pessimism and optimism about man, holding that as he actually is he is sadly in need of reconstruction, and that this reconstruction is possible, not through his unaided efforts, but through the grace of God. It is this vast topic, seen within the perspectives of both early and contemporary Quakerism, that Wilmer Cooper discusses. J. C. K.

Quaker Perspectives on the Nature of Man

WILMER A. COOPER

Ever since the dawn of human consciousness man has been inquisitive about himself. A modern parable of this insatiable desire of man to understand himself is expressed in the story of an insane person who was found rushing about the house frantically looking in all the cupboards and clothespresses and crawling under beds in search of something. When asked what he was looking for, he answered, "I am trying to find myself."

Human nature is an enigma and a mystery, and the ways in which it has been appraised have helped to determine the character of the major political and social philosophies of history, and subsequently, the institutions of society. The issue of man is just as alive today as ever, for what man may become individually and collectively depends upon the kind of beings we are.

The discussion of man which follows will take place within the framework of Quaker thought, relating something of both the historic (chiefly seventeenth century) and the contemporary views held by Friends. At the same time an effort will be made to formulate an adequate view of man which is consistent with the central Christian beliefs and testimonies of Friends. The topic will be dealt with under three major headings: (1) Man as created in the image of God; (2) Man as sinner; and (3) Man's hope of victory over sin and death.

MAN AS CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

Christian thought holds that the universe to which man belongs is not a product of chance or purely mechanical factors but was created by God out of nothing *(creatio ex nihilo)*. Since God is believed to be supremely good, his activities and all that he has created are held to be good. Man himself, as part of that creation, was good in his original nature as it came from the "hand

of God." In Genesis 1:26 it is stated that man was created in the very "image" and "likeness" of God.[1] This concept of the *imago Dei* sets forth the fundamental Hebrew-Christian affirmation about man and his relationship to God. Although man in creation was good, he did not remain so, for the "fall of man" impaired his original state of perfection. Exactly how the fall is to be understood is a very difficult problem, but embodied in this concept is a clue to the origin of man's predicament. Many contemporary theologians do not think of the fall as an historical event in the ancestry of mankind, but as something which every man experiences in his personal history. In this respect, every man is good in creation, but like Adam, he invariably falls into a state of separation from God, which is sin. This means that the original image with which he was created is defaced or destroyed so that the only means of its recovery is through the redemptive process of God's action through Christ, the new Adam.

Turning to the thinking of early Friends, we discover that George Fox held a clear conviction about the condition of man before the fall. Canby Jones in his study of George Fox describes the views of the founder of the Quaker movement in this way:

> He believed first in man's original righteousness . . . He believed that God created man in His own image, and clothed him with righteousness and holiness. Man lived then in a blessed, happy and innocent state. He was perfect and God gave him dominion over all the works of his hands. "Here was a blessed concord and amity. Man was blessed, and so was woman, and all things blest unto them. Man was perfect. God is perfect. All that he made was perfect."[2]

Isaac Penington, another first generation Friend, was also convinced that man was originally perfect as made in the image of God and that in the fall the image was completely lost.[3] He says that man's true relationship with God is one of "life" and "blessedness."[4]

Robert Barclay, the most systematic thinker of the early Quaker period, seemed reluctant to speculate about man's primitive state. He said that he would not attempt " . . . to dive into the many curious notions which many have concerning the condition of man before the fall . . ."[5] Yet Barclay agreed with Fox and Penington that what Adam lost in the fall was "that true fellowship and communion he had with God." We may con-

clude, therefore, from these and other similar references that, according to the belief of early Friends, man as created in the image of God was thought to enjoy a life of perfect fellowship with God.

Even though early Friends had a very clear notion of the condition of man before the fall, they have never indulged in excessive speculation about such matters. Indeed, their main concern has been with the actual condition of man and what can be done to effect his redemption from sin. Therefore, in considering Friends' views of the *imago Dei,* or the divine, God-given endowments available to man in creation, it is very important to turn our attention to the Quaker concepts of the Light, Christ, the Seed and other similar terms. It is particularly at this point that Friends have had a more exalted view of man than many other groups in the Christian tradition.

Friends have always been noted for their special preference for the Gospel of John, which declares that a universal Light lights every man that comes into the world (John 1:9). Fox and the early Quakers did not believe that this Light was a natural endowment of man, as many contemporary Quakers hold. They regarded it as a divine Light because it comes from Christ. Students of Fox such as Rachel King and Canby Jones agree that when Fox speaks of the Light he means both that the Light *is* Christ and that it is *from* Christ. Most of the terms which Fox uses, including Holy Spirit, the Seed, and the Measure, carry much the same meaning. They reflect the grace of God available to man through the living, inward Christ. One may picture these gifts of God's grace in a dynamic sense, available to enable man to recover his true relationship with God and yet never the property of man as such. It is important to grasp this understanding for it places Friends in the mainstream of Christian thinking about the *imago Dei.* More and more this Christian concept of man has come to mean a dynamic and reciprocal *relationship* of responsibility-in-love and of fellowship-in-love between God and man, rather than an innate human faculty, capacity, or substantial quality such as is reason, freedom, creativity, moral responsibility, or religious capacity. Sometimes the *imago* is symbolized by a mirror in which man, when he is in proper relationship to God, reflects the will and purposes of God.

If he is not in this proper relationship, he fails to reflect God's will and stands then in a relationship of sin.

In any Quaker discussion of God's gifts of Christ, the Light, or the Seed, the question arises, to what extent are these *inherent* in man's native capacities, or to what extent are they fresh *gifts* of God's Holy Spirit to man in every moment of existence? Is it proper to say that man "possesses" certain capacities and potentialities by virtue of his existence *as* man? Even more pertinent, to what extent may we say that man *has a nature?* What is the nature of this nature, or of the *self,* and does it possess a given set of qualities which constitute a person's identity and character? These are questions which were pertinent in the early Quaker discussion of what was "natural" to man and what was not, and they are pertinent also to the contemporary discussion of the nature of the self.

It has been customary to think of man as possessing a self which has a substantive nature in a metaphysical sense. The self so conceived constitutes a soul which possesses worth and independence by virtue of its continuity with the Being of God. In attempting to enlarge upon this idea we need to keep in mind two heritages in our past. One is the Greek philosophical tradition which placed emphasis on timeless and eternal being, on spiritual essences, and on the substantive and metaphysical nature of things. The second is the Hebrew tradition which placed greater emphasis on the objective and existential reality of time, on the dynamic will of God, and on human decisions and historical events. In the former tradition man was thought to possess a soul grounded in the order of Being and endowed with an independent worth of its own. The Hebrew view, on the other hand, not only saw man in relationship to God, but declared that man's worth and dignity are always derived from and are dependent upon this personal relationship. Man in this context does not have a nature so much as he has a *history* constituted by the past which has made him what he is. Man is a creature of decision, of will, and of freedom so that he both *has* a history and also *makes* history. As Gordon Kaufman points out, man's uniqueness lies in the fact that he is "radically historical." Insofar as he has a nature it is the capacity to possess a history, to have freedom, and to make decisions.[6]

The *early* Quaker view of man has a strong resemblance to the latter, Hebrew, interpretation, namely, that man stands in a dynamic and responsive relationship to a God who speaks and commands through the medium of his Holy Spirit. Man has a self and a nature only as it is constantly sustained by God and as it constantly interacts with God in divine-human encounter. Furthermore, man in response to God and other men makes specific decisions, which means that he is a history-making creature.

Much of *contemporary* Quakerism, on the other hand, has inclined toward the Greek, as opposed to the Hebrew, view of man in this respect. Both liberal and fundamentalist tendencies among Friends have looked upon man as having a substantive nature or soul which comes from God and, because of its immortal character, returns to God. Liberal Quakerism has made much of the phrase, "that of God in every man"—a term taken from George Fox but greatly misused in the twentieth century. As Canby Jones points out in his dissertation on Fox, this term had a meaning parallel to that of Christ within, the Light within, or the Seed, and did not mean that it represented a capacity which inheres in man. It referred, rather, to a dynamic concept of God working in and through the life of man. Insofar as "that of God in every man" signifies a basic worth or dignity in man, this worth is derived from God and not from man's nature as such. A twentieth-century Quaker "heresy" has been that of misusing the term "that of God in every man" in such a way as not only to imply that man's worth and dignity derive from an inherent goodness or divine spark, but also this use of the phrase has been instrumental in developing a rationale for a Quaker humanism which declares that God is parcelled out in all men so that each man possesses "a piece" of the Divine. The result of this misuse is that God is no longer considered transcendent, dwelling in his own being above all, but has become wholly immanent. A radical immanence of this type can easily become pantheism from a metaphysical point of view, or a self-sustained humanism from an anthropological point of view. This means that God is no longer necessary to man. At the same time, it sidesteps the whole problem of evil in the world. The assumption is that every man comes into the world possessing latent God-like qualities, which constitute a kind of "stan-

dard equipment" for him. Such a view of man makes prayer and worship irrelevant. This is probably the reason that the son of a prominent Quaker has remarked, "I don't believe Daddy believes in prayer anymore." When asked why, he replied, "Because I don't think Daddy believes in God." For such a person, Stoic resolve takes the place of prayer, and meditative illumination takes the place of worship.

Although the fundamentalist Friend at the other extreme has a strong "Christology" which assumes the helplessness of man to save himself, and his need of Christ, there is a tendency in him to adopt a Platonic view of the dualistic nature of man. Man is thought to have a soul which comes from God and is intended to return to God upon death, unless it merits eternal damnation. Thus the soul is believed to be that immortal part of man which exists beyond death, and has the capacity to inhabit places. This seems to be largely a Greek or Gnostic view, whereas the Hebrew-Christian concept is that man is animated by, or has breathed into him, a soul. This latter idea of the soul is best interpreted as breath, life, self, or perhaps personality. At the same time this soul is possessed for the Christian by a higher spirit, namely, the Spirit of God or Christ.[7]

From whatever Quaker vantage point we may attempt to judge the nature of man there has been much of contemporary Quaker religious thought, both liberal and conservative, which has not only misunderstood the central biblical view of man but has deviated from early Quaker interpretations in favor of Greek influences, especially those of Stoicism on liberal Quakerism and of Platonic dualism on conservative Quaker thought.

We must now leave behind our discussion of the Quaker view of the image of God in man. Certainly, Friends have always had a high view of the *imago,* believing that it is sufficient in man to enable him to overcome sin and become that which he is intended to become. Friends have had little interest in theorizing about an abstract state of "original perfection." Rather, their interest is in the goal of Christian perfection for man. The *imago Dei* is not for them a theological abstraction but should be considered from a functional and operational point of view, namely, that of the grace and power of love of God working in

and through the *life of man and society* to transform and perfect them.

MAN AS SINNER

There is a common notion abroad that Friends do not take sin and evil seriously, or perhaps that they do not even believe in them. Insofar as this is true the misconception has arisen in part from certain twentieth-century reinterpretations of historical Quakerism. The assumption has been made that the real spiritual forerunners of Fox and the early Quakers were the continental mystics and humanists. Coupled with this has been a repudiation of the metaphysical distinction between God and his world, taken for granted by early Friends, and in its place has come a philosophical Idealism which has so emphasized the immanence of God as virtually to lose sight of his transcendence. Such a view negates any real doctrine of creation and is not equipped to take sin and evil seriously. Consequently, it has no need for a thorough-going doctrine of redemption.

There is a sense in which any religious faith which stresses the inwardness of religion, or which emphasizes the image of God in man, or which places a premium on the Light within tends to play down emphasis upon sin, and thus lessens the need for a Messiah or Savior. But in spite of certain innovations in Quaker thought during the past generation, there is no question that early Friends had a thorough-going doctrine of sin and evil. To try to give any other interpretation than this is to do violence to historical facts.

In Fox's own conversion experience he declared, "For all are concluded under sin, and shut up in unbelief as I had been . . ."[8] Fox believed that through the disobedience of the first man, Adam, all men lost their "original righteousness." Both Adam and Eve fell "from the purity, holiness, innocency, pure and good estate, in which God placed them. So Adam died, and Eve died; and all died—in Adam."[9] Sin, therefore, is universal. The root of it was Adam's disobedience, but sin continues and multiplies because of our disobedience.

Fox was only one among many seventeenth-century Friends who held such a doctrine of sin. Isaac Penington went even farther than Fox did. According to him man is by nature in

"a state of sin and darkness; a state of death and misery; a state of enmity against God; a state accursed from God; exposed to his wrath and most righteous judgments, both here and hereafter."[10] And then Penington outdid the Calvinists in this regard when he wrote:

> Men speak of the relics of the image which the first man had: Ah! poor deceived hearts! What relics of life are there in a dead man? What relics of purity in a man wholly degenerated and corrupted? Nay, nay; the spiritual image, the divine image, the eternal life, the pure power and virtue is wholly lost; and there is nothing left . . ."[11]

In spite of man's lost condition the hope in Penington's view is to be found in his doctrine of the "seed." It is not entirely clear whether this is a principle of redemption resident in man, but it is in any case clear that divine action is needed to activate the seed. He declares that "the earth [i.e., man's sinful nature] is not so much as prepared to receive the seed, until the Lord send his plough in the heart."[12]

A third seventeenth-century Quaker, Robert Barclay, was no less certain of man's sinful propensities when he states:

> All Adam's posterity, or mankind, both Jews and Gentiles, as to the first Adam, or earthly man, is fallen, degenerated, and dead . . . that not only their words and deeds, but all their imaginations, are evil perpetually in the sight of God. . . .[13]

Although Barclay had a very deep sense of sin, he resembled the Scholastics in making a distinction between the Light and Seed on the one hand, and man's natural capacity for reason on the other. He said that

> We look upon reason as fit to order and rule man in things natural. For as God gave the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; so hath he given man the light of his Son, a spiritual divine light, to rule him in things spiritual, and the light of reason to rule him in things natural.[14]

Fox, Penington, and Barclay all concurred that sin is man's wilful disobedience or rebellion against God's will. However, they differed about sin as an inherited condition. For Fox and Penington it was not only a condition of man but also an act of disobedience. Because of Barclay's great concern not to condemn infants to damnation he refused to ascribe Adam's guilt to any man until that person had made Adam's sin his own by

an act of disobedience.[15] Thus infants who are not yet accountable have not transgressed God's will until they consciously sin.

Turning from the early Quaker view of man as sinner, we shall now look at some contemporary Quaker points of view. In the twentieth century Rufus Jones has probably had more influence on Quaker thought and practice than any other one person.[16] It is at the point of his analysis of sin that he differed markedly from his Quaker forebears. He held that the origin of sin stems from man's struggle to emerge from the biological processes of nature. At some point in man's emergence "instinct" and "moral insight" collide and conscience is born. Man gains in knowledge of good and evil. At this conscious level we no longer need to be governed by the unreflective push of instinct. Rather, we enter upon a stage of struggle between the lower impulses and the ideals and aspirations which are striving to guide and shape our life. Sin results when man's will, i.e., his whole self, surrenders to the impulses and drives of his "lower nature" as opposed to the values and ideals which represent the pull of his "higher nature."

Rufus Jones believed that there is a cumulative effect of sin in terms of its consequences. Sinful acts produce a "set of the nature" and the only way to overcome it is to get a new man, which means to undo his habit of sinning and develop in its place a pattern of good behavior. Rufus Jones did not regard man as originally and fundamentally bad or depraved. If he exercises his rational nature to master his lower impulses, then he is on his way to spiritual health. If one learns to love goodness and feel an attraction to it, then he will naturally choose the good as over against evil. Jones says:

> To apologize for sin as though it belonged to man's nature, to assume that he is a worm in the dust and necessarily evil are contrary to the entire idea of the Quaker. Fallen he may be, a stubborn sinner and degraded being, but that is because he is not what he was meant to be.[17]

The philosophical roots of Rufus Jones' view of sin are basically Platonic in origin. Sin arises out of a conflict between the spiritual and physical realms. Seldom is sin regarded as a personal affront against God or a defiance of his will. In the Hebrew-Christian tradition sin has always been highly personal—an act of disobedience against God and his will. In the Platonic tra-

dition evil is the absence of the good, and sin is to be equated with error or misjudgment. If the passions of the lower self disturb the rational calculations of the higher self, then mistakes will follow. But there is no sin committed in a personal sense.

Douglas Steere, who follows in the same spiritual heritage as Rufus Jones, would seem to diverge from his views as can be seen in enlightening references which he has made to sin as dealt with in St. Augustine's *Confessions.* The following quotation gives evidence of his sense of the depth and seriousness of sin from a Christian point of view:

> In the light of this I begin to see what is meant by this hereditary defiance of God called "original sin," which is so prominent in the treatises of Augustine. I begin to see that he is only writing a commentary upon Jesus' holding up as the object of his most bitter invective not the sins of the body but the sins of pride, of selfishness, of hardness of heart, of self-righteousness. And in this emphasis of Jesus and Augustine there seems to be a major cleavage with Greek thought as expressed in such a mind as Plato. For in Plato there is no talk of sin of the mind such as pride, that may keep man from blessedness. For Plato, mind does not block or blind itself. It is matter that keeps the mind in darkness. It is the unruly steeds of the body and its lustful appetites that are opposed to the character of the mind. It is the biological that retards the psychological, and if the mind could dominate all, if by proper education the psychological could assume supremacy over the biological, for Plato all would be well.[18]

Douglas Steere presents the warning about Augustine's doctrine of sin that apart from his *Confessions,* "it remains a pre-Christian legalistic formula, a forbidding and vicious dogma."[19]

Another contemporary Quaker, Elton Trueblood, is also less optimistic about man than was Jones and has referred to the "chronic" and "indigenous" nature of sin. He declares:

> The point is that man is, qua man, a sinner, even in his virtue. He may be able to overcome or to hold in check the sins of the flesh, but his temptations will not end thereby. In fact all agree that the sins of the spirit are far more terrible than are the sins of the flesh. . . . Of all the sins that of spiritual pride is probably the worst and the most damaging. It is thus that Paradise is lost.[20]

Elton Trueblood injects a warning, however, for those who would overemphasize the "indigenous" character of sin. He says that "a philosophy which would cut the nerve of moral effort is an evil philosophy and this is what is evil in either sheer optimism or sheer pessimism."[21] Moreover, he points out that the doctrine of man as sinner never describes the "whole truth"

about man. It is the gospel which teaches " . . . that God reaches out to every man and this we need to know far more vividly."[22]

In the face of two world wars and so much tragedy in our time, much of the optimistic temperament about the nature of man which prevailed earlier has now been superceded by a more realistic view of man. In addition to the quotations drawn from Douglas Steere and Elton Trueblood, other Quaker documentation of this could be given. At the same time a large segment of American Friends who identify themselves as Evangelicals have always retained a strong doctrine of sin. Arthur Roberts, writing as one of these, has stated, "Friends recognize that man is depraved, in that he cannot of his own power or inclination find salvation. Quakers are not so much optimistic about man as they are optimistic about the power of Christ to save man."[23]

There is another dimension of sin, however, which has become of major concern to us in the twentieth century, namely, the social nature and consequences of sin. The Social Gospel movement popularized a liberal version of the idea that men are caught in a net of social evil, much of which they have inherited. The contemporary version of this idea has been dramatized by Reinhold Niebuhr, whose impact upon social thought has not gone unnoticed by the Friends, though they have been slow to understand the real nature and relevance of his argument. Cecil Hinshaw says that although early Quakers did not subscribe to any utopian view of the world, he doubts whether they understood as well as we do today ". . . the extent to which man in his corporate relationship in society normally engages in evil that far transcends personal sin."[24] He states further:

> Our vision of a new world and culture must never blind us to the hard fact that even good men are caught up in the magnetism of corporate sin and held by a power of attraction difficult even for psychologists to explain.[25]

The real crux of the problem for Friends is that few of them make any distinction between personal ethics and social ethics. Quakerism in both its conservative and liberal varieties is today highly individualistic, carrying with it a personal ethic which is supposed to be applied not only to the personal affairs of the individual but to all the corporate decisions of society. The Third World Conference of Friends held at Oxford, England in 1952 declared: "We call upon people every-

where to . . . behave as nations with the same decency as they would behave as men and brothers, to substitute the institutions of peace for the institutions of war."[26] One could cite many Quaker statements of this type. It seems very difficult for Friends to comprehend the complexity of group behavior and group decisions, and to understand why organizational and national affairs cannot be conducted on the same personal basis of love as those of the family and small community. Kenneth Boulding has quite rightly pointed out that " . . . only small organizations can be personal."[27] In the same reference he says that "a good deal of harm has been done by interpreting the moral ideal of the 'brotherhood of man' . . . to mean that all human organization must be like a family, in its looseness of organization and its complexity of personal interaction."

Douglas Steere has taken sharp issue with what he calls the "collectivist theologians" of our time who have attempted to give a theological rationale for a valid and relevant contemporary social ethic. Although he recognizes the service they have performed in their study and analysis of group sin, his general criticism of this point of view sounds much like George Fox's charge against the Calvinists of his time, that they "preached up sin to the grave." Douglas Steere's main interest is with the saint, who he believes is able to bridge the gulf between personal and group ethical behavior and to demonstrate the way of human brotherhood in human relations. In championing the saint as an antidote to the "socio-theological pessimism" of our time, he states:

> The saint does not arrive at his ethical insight from a study of the power ethics of mass-groups. He arrives at it from a firsthand knowledge of the power of the *I,* the *Me,* and the *Mine* in the heart of man and of the expulsive power of God's love to melt them down and to allow brotherhood to emerge. Group egotism, group pride, and group sin are all intense realities for the saint, and he knows them as a lump that is hard to reduce. But he would not let the lump-like nature of group sin intimidate him into accepting it as an ultimate and irreducible surd. God has faced lumps of corporate sin before, even lumps that were in their surroundings more coherent and more defiant than those of our day, and He has softened them up and often dissolved them. The saint knows that he does not work alone.[28]

These quotations and references serve to illustrate the fact that although Quakers are noted for their social concern and

their attempt to demonstrate a living faith which has as its product a vital social ethic, their approach continues to be strongly personal. They place such a premium on the individual that even in their own groups they manifest a lack of understanding of the corporate complexities and ambiguities which are inherent in social intercourse. It seems difficult for Friends to realize that where groups of people are involved there is a multiplicity of claims to be considered for every choice made and that clear black and white decisions are very uncommon. Because Friends, too, have to live with these situations all the time, they are often obsessed with guilt feelings about the fact that decisions in this life are not always clearcut.

Another insight, arising chiefly from depth psychology, which has not been completely accepted by Friends, is that concerning the irrational aspect of man's life at the deep levels of the self. This is what some theologians would call the "demonic element" in man's life, both in terms of his personal and his corporate life. For example, Rufus Jones once deplored the fact that man in his "insane folly" "wrecked" the world between 1914-18. But in his analysis of the situation he shows little recognition that man's behavior is not always governed by reason, and that irrational and demonic elements frequently predominate. To recognize the ugly and evil side of man in terms of the irrational drives which undergird much of his life is not to degrade him, but should be a sign of moral and spiritual maturity.

There is a sense in which the public's view that Friends do not take sin seriously is correct. Whether liberal or conservative, Friends have a dogged assurance that man, if he does what he is supposed to do, will come out all right. If Friends are to be honest with themselves and to avoid superficiality in their understanding of man, they must re-evaluate their view of man as a sinner. If we believe that man's image is most clearly reflected when he is doing the will of God, then we must surely know that sin is present in a very real sense when man disobeys God's will. But just as the image relationship may become a condition in man, so sin may become a condition. Sin is something which man both *does* and *is*. Because man is endowed with freedom he makes choices against God's will. Then he becomes a victim

of his own sin and is in bondage. In this state he is not completely free to find saving solutions to his predicament. Man is a "radically historical" creature in that all of his past choices condition those of the present. Sin is man's creation of a distorted history for himself. As the early Quakers knew so well, man's only hope under these circumstances lies in the "power of the Lord" to break this enslaved condition of man and give him a new freedom from the distorted past that he has created. It is to this hope for man's life we now turn.

VICTORY OVER SIN AND DEATH

It is impossible from the Christian perspective to discuss the doctrine of man without at the same time discussing the doctrine of God. Man is ultimately a "theonomous being," which is to say that his life derives from God. Without the intervening grace of God he cannot expect to achieve victory over sin and death. Neither can man expect to live the life of holy obedience apart from the sustaining power and grace of God.

If there was anything characteristic of the early Quakers, it was their conviction of man's dependence upon God. Geoffrey Nuttall has pointed out that the most characteristic phrase of Fox was "the power of the Lord was over all."[29] This implied that man had access to this power and that it was this power which would enable him to overcome sin. The early Friends had just as deep a sense of the sin of man as did the Calvinists of their day, but they differed from them by insisting that God's grace and power were sufficient to overcome sin, and that this could happen for all men, not just for the elect. As necessary as it is to face up to the reality of sin and evil, it would be a pagan rather than a Christian view of man which failed to find in God's redemptive love and grace the answer to man's deep-going sin. It was certainly something of this which Fox felt when he wrote: "I saw . . . there was an ocean of darkness and death, but an infinite ocean of light and love which flowed over the ocean of darkness. In that also I saw the infinite love of God. . . ."[30]

A major characteristic of early Friends was their belief that a life of Christian perfection and holiness was literally possible. They believed that whereas all men died through the disobedience of Adam, all men shall be made alive through the obedi-

ence of the Perfect One—Christ. In Fox's own conversion experience he said:

> Now was I come up in spirit through the flaming sword into the paradise of God. All things were new, and all the creation gave another smell unto me than before, beyond what words can utter. I knew nothing but pureness, and innocency, and righteousness, being renewed up into the image of God by Christ Jesus, so that I say I was come up to the state of Adam which he was in before he fell.[31]

Fox did not hold that man could sin no more, but that as he remained obedient to the Light of Christ he would continue in the life of perfection. Although Isaac Penington did not write extensively about the doctrine of Christian perfection, he nevertheless agreed with Fox and the other seventeenth-century Friends when he said, "Is it not the will of Christ that his disciples should be perfect, as their heavenly Father is perfect? . . . Will God dwell in an unholy temple? Will he dwell where sin dwells?"[32]

Robert Barclay in his *Apology* devotes an entire Proposition to the subject of perfection. We excerpt a few of his statements in order to present the main theme of his argument.

> We do believe, that . . . to those in whom Christ comes to be formed, and the new man brought forth, and born of the incorruptible seed, as that birth, and man in union therewith, naturally doth the will of God, it is possible so far to keep to it, as not to be found daily transgressors of the law of God."[33]

Even though he believed thoroughly in the possibility of Christian perfection Barclay is also clear that the life of Christian perfection does "admit of growth." We are not expected to reach the holiness and perfection of God "but only a perfection proportionable and answerable to man's measure . . . and [which] enables to answer what he [God] requires of us."[34] There is also the possibility that those who " . . . do not diligently attend to that of God in the heart" will lose this state of perfection. "And we doubt not," says Barclay, "but many good and holy men, who have arrived to everlasting life, have had divers ebbings and flowings of this kind."[35] On the other hand he declares, ". . . I will not affirm that a state is not attainable in this life, in which to do righteousness may be so natural to the regenerate soul, that in the stability of that condition he cannot sin."[36] Barclay adds a personal note to confess that he never arrived at such a state himself.

Although we have implied that for early Friends man's chief hope is to live a life of Christian perfection in which the life of sin is blotted out, this needs further examination. The term Christian perfection carries with it too strong an implication that man's primary and only responsibility is ethical. Even though early Friends were very certain that Christian perfection required a high level of behavior, they were first of all concerned with a life of purity and holiness in relationship to God, believing that such a life would in turn show forth the fruits of Christ-like behavior. Arthur Roberts in his research on George Fox has suggested that the key relationship Friends sought was one of holiness. The word "holy" as used in the Old Testament, would fit very well the meaning Arthur Roberts intends. Whereas sin is that which separates man from God, the holy is that which brings him into a closer relationship with God. Coupled with this was the idea that no one could come near the greatness and goodness of God without being pure, so the term "holy" gradually took on ethical implications, that one's life must be free from actual sins in order to be accepted by God.

Although Cecil Hinshaw and other Friends have written extensively on Christian perfectionism as the key to early Quakerism, it would seem to this writer that the term used by Thomas Kelly, "holy obedience," indicates most clearly what the Quaker objective really is. Such a term incorporates the emphasis which Arthur Roberts has so well restated, namely, the primary importance of man's right spiritual relationship to God, and secondly, the idea of Friends' continuing concern for right moral behavior. The first is to be found in the word "holy" and the latter in the word "obedience." Moreover, it definitely provides for a God-centered ethic, and not a humanly contrived moral code or standard of conduct. It also establishes the right relationship between religion (or theology) and ethics, namely, the primacy of the former over the latter. From a Christian point of view ethics is never autonomous but derives its authority from man's relationship to God.

There is one further consideration which must be given brief attention, namely, the redemption or salvation of man. From what has been said before there was no question in the

minds of early Friends that man stood in need of the redemptive action of God through Christ to effect his final justification and reconciliation. Today among Friends there still exists a conservative theology which holds as strongly as ever to man's need for the atoning work of Christ to make possible man's salvation. Liberal Friends, on the other hand, have so emphasized "that of God in every man" as a inherent "built-in" quality of goodness that man is believed to be able through self-discipline and self-improvement to achieve the abundant life. It is recognized that man is not what he ought to be, but he does not stand in need of a Redeemer. If he resolves to follow the teachings of Jesus, he can do so. Christian nurture in place of Christian redemption is emphasized, rather than Christian redemption *and then* Christian nurture to enable growth toward a life of holy obedience.

Since in a subsequent issue of *Quaker Religious Thought* it is planned to devote an entire number to the work of Christ, it would be out of place to deal extensively with the subject here. The writer wishes to state his belief, however, that within the context of historic Quakerism there cannot be developed an adequate doctrine of man without a corresponding doctrine of God's redemptive action through Jesus Christ. Moreover, from an empirical point of view it does not seem to the writer that man is able to extricate himself from his sinful predicament without the assistance of divine action.

Passing reference should be made to a point of view expressed by several contemporary students of Quakerism, especially Lewis Benson, that for early Friends the redemptive process was no less a corporate experience than it was an individual experience. Great emphasis is placed on Fox's idea of the "gathered church" as a redemptive community, within the context of which community man's salvation is worked out. The writer would think that both aspects of redemption must be stressed. Man was created for fellowship with God and his fellowmen, and it is only reasonable that he work out his salvation in the redemptive community of Christ. But it is also important for each individual to appropriate the new life to himself, and to do so he must repent, overcome his love for sin, and rededicate himself to the will and purposes of God.

Finally, from the Christian point of view, the redemptive action of God must not only help man to win victory over sin but over death as well. The Christian hope for man does not terminate with historical time, but holds that there is a dimension of God's Time into which man may enter. Just as God creates body, mind, and spirit in the beginning, so he recreates a new spiritual body at the end for those whose lives have been dedicated to him. Friends historically have held to the view that God can and will sustain the faithful in both life and death. Therefore, a life of holy obedience here and now, which Friends declare is possible, is only preliminary to the life of victory over death promised to all who would be gathered unto the Father.

In summary, one may say that Friends have always held a high view of man. Although they are not inclined to measure the image of God in terms of an "original perfection," it is quite clear that Friends believe that man as created by God is not only precious in his sight but is able to respond to the Light of Christ working within to transform and perfect his God-given potentalities. Although Friends throughout their history have been willing to recognize the sin of man, both as an act of will and as a condition of the self, still their chief preoccupation has not been with sin but with the availability of the power and grace of God to recreate the human situation in all its dimensions, personal as well as social. Moreover, Friends hold that if man is faithful to his God he will be victor over sin and death. This victory can be known as a life of holy obedience to God here and now, and it carries with it a hope for man in the total economy of God's purposes.

Friends, therefore, not only have a high view of man, but they also expect a great deal of him. Against the Christian background out of which Quakerism sprang, they hold Jesus Christ to be not only God's revelation of himself but the standard of Christian perfection toward which man is intended to grow and mature. But man is never left alone in this venture. His hope lies in the fact that he stands in a divine-human relationship and action in which God is always ready to restore man to his rightful relationship if he will only respond in faith and obedience.

References

1. For an extended treatment of this subject, see David Cairns, *The Image of God in Man,* London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1953.
2. T. Canby Jones, *The Christology of George Fox,* unrevised doctoral dissertation, Yale University, 1955, p. 167. Fox's quotation from Sermon, 1680, pp. 61-62, 64.
3. Isaac Penington, *Works,* Fourth Ed., Vol. I, p. 484.
4. *Ibid.,* Vol. I, p. 142.
5. Robert Barclay, *Apology,* Prop. IV, paragraph II, part 1.
6. Gordon Kaufman, "The *Imago Dei* As Man's Historicity," *Journal of Religion,* July 1956, pp. 157-168.
7. For treatment of the biblical basis of this interpretation see Millar Burrows, *An Outline of Biblical Theology,* Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, pp. 138-141.
8. Fox's *Journal,* Nickalls ed., p. 11.
9. Fox, Sermon, 1680, p. 64. Quoted by T. Canby Jones, *op. cit.*
10. Penington, *op. cit.,* I, p. 167.
11. *Ibid.,* I, p. 484.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Barclay, *op. cit.,* Prop. IV.
14. *Ibid.,* Prop. V and VI. Sec. XVI.
15. *Ibid.,* Prop. IV, Sec. II.
16. See author's unpublished doctoral dissertation, *Rufus M. Jones and the Contemporary Quaker View of Man,* Vanderbilt University, 1956.
17. Rufus M. Jones, "The Quaker's Conception of God," *Beyond Dilemmas, A Quaker Look at Life,* ed. S. B. Laughlin, Philadelphia, 1937, pp. 40-41.
18. Douglas V. Steere, *On Beginning from Within,* New York: Harper and Brothers, 1943, pp. 104-105.
19. *Ibid.,* p. 107.
20. Elton Trueblood, *Signs of Hope in a Century of Despair,* New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950, p. 56.
21. *Ibid.,* p. 60.
22. *Ibid.,* p. 65.
23. Arthur O. Roberts, *The People Called Quakers,* published by Oregon Yearly Meeting of Friends, n.d., p. 12.
24. Cecil Hinshaw, *Toward Political Responsibility,* Pendle Hill, 1954, p. 21.
25. *Ibid.,* p. 22.
26. Friends World Conference Report, *Friends Face Their Fourth Century,* London, 1952, p. xviii.
27. Kenneth E. Boulding, *The Organizational Revolution, A Study in the Ethics of Economic Organization,* New York: Harper and Brothers, 1953, p. 78.
28. Douglas V. Steere, *op. cit.,* p. 23.
29. Introduction to Fox's *Journal,* Nickalls ed., p. xix.
30. Fox's *Journal,* Penny ed., p. 11.
31. Fox's *Journal,* Nickalls ed., p. 27.
32. Penington, *op. cit.,* IV, p. 239.
33. Barclay, *op. cit.,* Prop. VIII, Part I, Paragraph 1.
34. *Ibid.,* Prop. VIII, Part I, Paragraph 2.
35. *Ibid.*
36. *Ibid.*

Comments

A. BURNS CHALMERS

When Reinhold Niebuhr was beginning to write his famous Gifford Lectures on "The Nature and Destiny of Man" he told a small group that he knew what his first sentence (slightly changed in its final form) would be: "Man has always been troubled about himself." It is this simple disquiet and question which has been the persistent background of the most careful analyses of man's nature and destiny. It is the more profound levels of man's relation to God, the "primary relationship," which Wilmer Cooper examines. He has given us a concise, accurate, and well-reasoned statement.

In commenting on this essay it will be convenient to consider in succession the three categories under which he views man: image of God, sinner, and victory over sin and death. Each is thoughtfully related to both the historic and contemporary views of Friends.

I

It is one of the strengths of Wilmer Cooper's discussion of man as made in the image of God that he so clearly states the Hebrew position which regards man as a "history-making creature," in whom the characteristics of decision, will, and freedom take such a prominent part. He takes issue with the Greek tradition and, in effect, rejects it. He inveighs against Friends for misunderstanding the central biblical view of man and succumbing to what we might call "creeping Hellenism." This danger is vividly seen in what is termed the twentieth-century heresy of misusing the phrase "that of God in every man" to develop a rationale for a "Quaker humanism." The result is to veer toward a radical immanence with the pitfall of pantheism too close for comfort.

With the main contention here set forth I agree. Man is not "innately good" in Rousseau's sense or in the sense usually

attributed to the Greek view of man. Wilmer Cooper properly calls in question the concept of the inherent goodness of man. A Christian anthropology could not condone such an optimistic and complacent view of man. And yet I am troubled because it is now so much the fashion to put far from us the Greek estimate of man. *Anthropos,* the Greek word for man, has been translated "the upward-looking creature." Figuratively speaking it is this posture in man to which Hellenism testifies. This idea may be amorphous and unstructured but such a conception of man merits attention rather than dismissal. In his book *The Idea of the Holy,* Rudolph Otto identifies "awe" as basic to the experience of worship. The upward-looking capacity of man could be a prelude to awe. And concerning the object of worship, Otto points out in regard to Plato that "no one has enunciated more definitively than this master-thinker that God transcends all reason, in the sense that He is beyond the powers of our conceiving, not merely beyond our powers of comprehension."

It is difficult to articulate the relevance of Greek thought about man to the Quaker view. God's gifts of Christ, the Light, or the Seed certainly are "fresh gifts of God's Holy Spirit to man in every moment of his existence." It is true that man merely as man does not "possess" certain capacities. I am suggesting, however, that the Greek insight deals with a preparation for larger comprehension on the part of man which has been operating through the grace of God "from the foundation of the world."

II

In his section on "Man as Sinner" Wilmer Cooper considers especially the implications of a realistic estimate of man and, also, the social nature and consequences of sin. We must be grateful to Wilmer Cooper for keeping our eyes riveted on the nature of man as a child of God. With all their variations Fox, Penington, Barclay, and early Friends in general regarded sin as "man's wilful disobedience or rebellion against God's will." Holding to the deeply rooted reality of sin in man they nevertheless believed that the Seed and Light within man were there by the grace of God through which man is saved. In contrast to many modern optimistic views of man, including some Friends,

they "took sin seriously" but did not regard it as the final word.

Today there are several kinds of *reductionism* in contemporary views of man. According to one of these, man is reduced to what his genes will permit him to become. This is the nominalist biological position. It makes no point of contact with the biblical affirmation "Now are we the sons of God and it doth not appear what we shall be." In connection with last year's centennial interest in Charles Darwin the nominalist biological position was stated by Dr. Robert S. Morison in his article "Darwinism: Foundation for an Ethical System?" He holds that "there can be no such thing as an ideal man." It is his contention that "the crucial Darwinian question for our time of crisis is whether or not man can broaden his culture, his concept of human brotherhood, and his tolerance of variation so that it becomes coextensive with his gene pool." This is admirable up to a point and there is plenty of work to do in achieving this objective. But for the Christian and the Quaker the goal is not even what is "coextensive with his gene pool." It is beyond that in the realm of what is coextensive with the "new being." It is one of the virtues of Wilmer Cooper's essay that we are confronted with the depths to which man as sinner can go but also we glimpse what through grace he might become.

The social nature and consequences of sin are not clearly seen when we fail to distinguish between personal and social ethics. Friends such as Kenneth Boulding and Douglas Steere do see the problems—in economics with respect to organizations and in theology with respect to the "collectivist theologians." Depth psychology is imaginatively consulted for its light on man. The British historian George Macaulay Trevelyan has said "close your eyes to John Woolman one century and you will get John Brown the next, with Grant to follow." In John Woolman we see personified what the Quaker understands about the possibilities of the individual in personal and social relationships under the "power of the Lord."

III

The doctrine of man is dependent on the doctrine of God. Early Quakers were clear about man's dependence on God. They would have agreed with Schleiermacher's phrase, "dependence,

absolute dependence on God." Wilmer Cooper brings out most helpfully the central place of "holy obedience" and the thoughtful interpretation of these words which Arthur Roberts has recently given. The place of Christ and of the divine-human relationship are set forth.

To my mind the strength of this paper is its careful scholarship, its fairness in interpreting relevant insights and positions from historical and contemporary views, and the affirmative faith which it states. As I have indicated I am troubled by the short shrift apt to be given to Greek thought. But I regard this essay on the Quaker view of man as a living contribution to what Professor Robert L. Calhoun describes in his words: "The Christian understanding of man, with its relentless pessimism and its exultant faith, is no ordinary utopian dream, for it sees man not merely rehoused and re-educated, but remade."

EDNA M. HALL

All who are interested in early Quaker thought will be indebted to Wilmer A. Cooper for this paper. It is a real contribution to the subject, particularly in its recognition of the Biblicism of early Friends and in the conjunction of man, sin, and "the hope of victory," though "grace" would have seemed the more appropriate term. It is also a timely reminder that, whatever the modern interpretation of the condition of man and the light of Christ, there is no doubt that early Friends regarded man as fallen and a sinner, and the light as wholly of God and not a natural endowment of man. Yet the paper states rather than investigates the dividing line between "liberal" and "evangelical" as regards the conception of the nature of man and of the light of Christ. The terms "image relationship" and "holy obedience" do not resolve the problem: the former, indeed, seems to perpetuate an early Quaker confusion of thought, as I wish now to indicate.

Early Quaker Biblicism seems to consist in the antithesis between the "natural" or "carnal" man and the "spiritual" man, a distinction corresponding roughly to the Old Testament *basar-ruach* and the New Testament *sarx-pneuma,* and in the realization that man derives "worth" and "life" only from God. The

interest of early Friends in the fall and the origin of sin reflect the theological pre-occupations of the time rather than the Bible. With fine insight, they rightly use "the image" as a Christological term but they overlook its dependence on other lines of thought. The *image,* the likeness of man to God, may be reflected in man's conformity in holiness, righteousness, and wisdom, not forgetting the last, but man's *relationship with God* is expressed in the Bible in historical and *personal* terms such as election, covenant, and sonship, summed up in the New Testament, of course, in Christ. Within that relationship a man is commanded to "love" the Lord his God. Ethic and relation are inseparable but not identical. Man's response is in a context of law or Gospel: it is not only attention to an inwardly felt principle.

"Liberal" thought which minimizes the gravity of sin seems to take too unrealistic a view of man and the human situation and too low a view of the majesty of God but it does not have to grapple with the difficulty of explaining how the grace of God becomes effective in sinful man. By contrast, the early Friends did see man as bound and dead in sin and Christ as the means of his being given life. But how? Man may not have a separable soul to be saved or lost nor, as the theologians of the Reformation tended to suppose, a bare will to be moved. Since the Quakers were also suspicious of the human mind, they appeared to think of man as a mere vessel to be indwelt by the light or "Christ within" which is something akin to possession rather than transformation. There is a sense in which, apart from God, man has no "life" but he still "is." In Hebrew thought, however, flesh, mind, will, and understanding are unitary: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart" (seat of understanding), "with all thy soul" (nephesh), and "with all thy might."

It is the conviction of this writer also that "within the context of historic Quakerism there cannot be developed an adequate doctrine of man without a corresponding doctrine of God's redemptive love through Jesus Christ." It is by no means clear, however, that the historic Quaker terms and categories of thought are adequate to what were certainly the message and intent of the early Friends. "The light of Christ," for instance, though a scriptural and highly significant term is too inclusive

and too ambiguous a concept to be completely acceptable. It can mean the striving of the Spirit "within," or that which shows evil, or Christ, or the Holy Spirit. It is the proximity of the light that mitigates the condition of fallen man. In the light is "power" to cause the act of obedience. The phrase, "that of God in every man" refers not so much to a latent capacity as to the availability of grace, of the possibility of man's becoming *in actu* what he is *in potentia,* since when the light is "attended to" and "obeyed" it can be the indwelling Christ or the Holy Spirit "within."

In so far as the light reveals evil the understanding is involved, but in a vestigial way. In the light a man "sees" Christ his Saviour. How far is the mind, indeed the whole personality, engaged in this apprehension, and what of the Gospel? The regenerate man has knowledge but it is by "revelation," injected in the light. The old antithesis between inner and outer clouds the issue. Again, the work of the light within is that of restoring the image, so making possible the perfection in which Cecil Hinshaw finds the key to early Quaker thought. Is this a man's own light or is it that of Christ within? The source of the early Quaker ethical pre-occupation is the doctrine of the light and the dualistic conception of man.

While I would agree with Wilmer A. Cooper in regarding "fellowship in love" and "holy obedience" as respectively man's true relation to God and its outcome as both biblical and a true interpretation of the message of Quakerism, it seems to me that this message needs to rest on a foundation broader and more secure than the mechanical view of man as image of God and the too-inclusive, frequently too-impersonal, idea of the light. Holy obedience is derivative from and secondary to a right *relation in love* (love in the biblical sense) and the basis for this is *faith,* an attitude of trust and dependence-in-freedom of the whole man which is best summed up in the Pauline text, "The life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

Is not the relationship we seek to define that of *sonship,* that of which the Spirit bears testimony with our spirit, through the Son who is the image of God? It is a relation which implies

conformity and obedience. Further, it will yield that experience of corporateness among the "many brethren" which is so essential a part of early Quakerism.

DUANE MOON

Wilmer Cooper has done a superb piece of work with one of the most delicate theological assignments one could anticipate. There is so much in his statement that is highly commendable that I hesitate to be so presumptuous as to offer a critical review. In fact, he has articulated in an excellent manner a number of things that need to be said in appraising contemporary Quaker thought with respect to this subject.

Some of the things that need to be said on this topic and, in the opinion of this reviewer, were said, may merit the following brief comment. There was an endeavor to maintain the dignity and worth of man without entertaining a naive optimism that fails to note the deep inclinations toward self-centeredness and evil in man. Thus the author rightfully addressed himself to a discussion of the phrase, which has almost become a cliché, "that of God in every man." His discussion of this phrase is one of finest and most concise analyses that I have read for some time. This "realistic view of man" is not one of hopelessness, for it is balanced by showing that man's correction is in equal reality brought about by God's redemption of him in Christ. These important basic conclusions readily fit within the biblical and historical Quaker message.

I would like, however, to mention one or two areas of the paper that might bear further clarification and emphasis. In his outline of the two extremes of religious thought among Quakers, namely, theological liberalism and fundamentalism, the author has not indulged in over-simplification, yet to use the terms "fundamentalist" and "conservative" interchangeably throughout the paper, as if they were synonymous, is not altogether accurate.

There is a distinction between theological fundamentalism and conservatism that needs to be noted, for the implications are applicable to the discussion. On the one hand, I too feel that fundamentalism gives evidence of being the product of

Greek philosophical influence rather than of the Hebrew-Christian tradition. But fundamentalism is not the position held by the wholesome theological conservatism which to a large degree is present in much of contemporary Quaker thought. Indeed, the basic conclusions of Wilmer Cooper's article itself may, if I am permitted to make such a precarious suggestion, be placed in the category of conservative theology, yet one can hardly conceive of his explanation as an example of one of the extremes in Quaker thought.

There are a number of points where it seems that fundamentalism and conservatism are almost identical. Actually, however, there are some basic differences that do differentiate the two approaches. Let me mention one example, this with respect to the Bible. Fundamentalism has little or no appreciation for historical and literary criticism of the Scriptures, whereas conservatism welcomes such scholarship and seeks to understand the biblical message within the framework of such research. The above tendency of fundamentalism is a direct result of its founding religious authority and revelation too largely in the *written* word, which is given such proportion that it overshadows the religious authority and revelation of God in the *living* Word, Jesus Christ, which in the view of conservatism should receive priority.

This means that conservatism, in contrast to fundamentalism, conceives of the ultimate disclosure of God to man in terms of person and history. The self-disclosure of God in Christ was an historical event, the culmination of a series of earlier divine revelations. Such a position is foreign to Greek philosophical thought but is agreeable to the best of the Hebrew-Christian tradition.

We labor this clarification because the majority of Quakers today, like their forefathers, are of the theological conservative persuasion, which happily finds its religious heritage within the Hebrew-Christian tradition rather than within the extreme of Greek philosophical influence.

Let us next give a brief glance to Wilmer Cooper's discussion of "Man as Sinner." His historical insight with regard to Quaker thought on this subject bears commendation when he says that early Friends had a thorough-going doctrine of sin and

evil. It is further observed that in the Hebrew-Christian tradition "sin has always been highly personal." With this kind of historical background and the tragedy of two world wars in our own century, the contemporary scene is thus taking a "more realistic view of man." One appreciates the plea for the social relevancy of the gospel as a correction to the effect of social evil. The point is well taken.

Any serious thinker is faced with the dilemma of personal and social evil and the finding of a proper solution. Harry Emerson Fosdick confesses in his stimulating autobiography, *The Living of These Days,* that he wrestled with this problem. He writes:

> As a preacher I found myself constantly on a two-way street. If I started with the social gospel, I ran into the need of better individual men and women who alone could create and sustain a better social order, and so found myself facing the personal gospel; and if I started with the personal gospel, I ran straight into the evils of society that ruin personality, and so found myself facing the social gospel.

However, I am impressed with what appears to this critic to be the somewhat apologetic recognition on the part of the author to Friends' continued emphasis upon approaching the ills of our day through the personal method. Our "premium on the individual" is not to our discredit but certainly to our merit. We hesitate to underestimate the tremendous impact upon the dynamic correction of social ills when individual men, through their personal encounter with God, have found an inner strength that releases them for a genuine ministry of Christian service. The moral and spiritual thrust of such persons within society is amazing and heartening.

The discussion of the final paragraph, which deals with the subject of victory over sin and death, is excellent. A Christian perfection that lends itself primarily to ethical conduct with little insight into religious faith, or one that witnesses to a so-called vital faith with no evidence of exalted ethical conduct, still leaves much to be desired. Such views as these can easily become attached to religious bigotry which may launch its adherents into all kinds of psychological and spiritual frustrations. The use of the term "holy obedience," as borrowed from Thomas Kelly, is adequate and comprehensive. Such an approach finds the

harmonious relationship between faith and works which is an essential for any doctrine of Christian perfection.

I wish to express again personal gratitude for the thoughtful and helpful article that Wilmer Cooper prepared for our study.

Response to Comments

WILMER A. COOPER

There are four main criticisms made by the reviewers which require thoughtful comments. *Burns Chalmers* raises an important point concerning my apparent bias for the Hebrew as opposed to the Greek tradition. He refers to this as the fear of "creeping Hellenism" among Friends. In replying to this it might help to point out that my chief interest as a student of religion and philosophy began with Greek philosophy, but in recent years it has gradually shifted to a firm commitment to the Hebrew-Christian faith and tradition. Of course, one cannot reflect upon and explore the meaning of the Hebrew-Christian faith without revealing his indebtedness to Greek philosophy and categories of thought. The biblical and early church traditions were greatly influenced by Greek thought forms. But from a Quaker perspective, as well as from that of contemporary religious existentialism, the Greek world view and metaphysical presuppositions seem inadequate and unsatisfactory. The reasoned approach of the Greeks has its proper place in religion only as long as it remains the handmaid of religious faith and experience.

Burns Chalmers points out the very fine sense in which the Greeks used the term *anthropos* to refer to man as "the upward looking creature." But the difficulty is that Greek rationalism assumes the self-sufficiency of man and declares him to be an autonomous creature. It presupposes a freedom of ultimate independence rather than the biblical idea of ultimate dependence. There is in the Greeks little trace of the feeling which one gets from reading the sixth chapter of Isaiah, where the prophet comes into the temple and experiences the holiness, majesty, and goodness of God as prerequisite to being commissioned by Yahweh to go forth and serve. The tendency in all rationalistic thought, including the Greeks, is to view such a response as a sign of weakness or "failure of nerve." It is this kind of

"creeping Hellenism" in Quakerism which is antithetical to what the writer understands to be the genius of Christian humility and our necessary sense of dependence upon God. Early Quaker religious thought and practice more nearly resembled the prophetic tradition of Israel than the calculating and mystical approach of the Greeks.

The Greek rejection of the physical realm as evil forms a dualism between spirit and matter which also must be rejected by anyone who believes that all of God's creation is good and that God is Lord of all life. The Quaker idea that religion and life (representing the spiritual and material realms) are ultimately reconcilable and bound together compels one, if he is consistent, to espouse the Hebrew view of creation as opposed to the Greek view.

But even more important in this debate for Quakerism today is that the "hellenization" of liberal Quakerism has led many Friends to the assumption that there is really no difference between Quakerism and some of the non-Christian religions, such as certain aspects of Hinduism and Buddhism. This has resulted in part from the resemblances which Quakers have noted between Greek mysticism and modes of thought, and their corresponding counterparts in the Eastern religions. Anyone who is aware of the shrinking globe on which we live must be awakened to the importance of finding some *modus vivendi* with the non-Western world and its religious and political faiths. But to suggest that historic Quakerism, which is rooted in the Christian tradition, has all along constituted a blend of these various religious faiths and metaphysical systems is to exhibit a lack of historical discernment and intellectual integrity. This is not the place to discuss this problem further but only to point out the difficulties which one encounters when the attempt is made to declare Quakerism's independence of its historical rootage in Christian faith. In trying to reconcile the conflict between some contemporary Quaker thought with its historical past, one is reminded of a recent Quaker discussion in which one member said that the reason early Friends were so much interested in the Bible was because Emerson's essays had not yet been written!

A second criticism, raised by *Duane Moon,* about using the terms "fundamentalism" and "conservatism" interchangeably, is

well taken. The problem is to find terms which correctly describe the variety of theological positions held by Friends. The labels "liberalism" and "evangelicalism" represent other terms which are also loosely used and are often unfairly applied. There is such a thing as a "liberal spirit" among conservatives and a "fundamentalist spirit" among liberals. There are minds which are open to new truth at both extremes, and there are closed minds represented in each group. Take, for example, those who identify themselves with the Evangelical Association of Friends and object to the term "fundamentalist" being applied to them. A number of these Friends have given adequate reason for their objection by the fresh interest they have shown in scholarly research and critical inquiry. Although Duane Moon's criticism is justified, he would probably also agree that it is almost impossible to apply labels fairly, or even to find labels which fairly represent the various shades of theological belief among Friends. In the original article, it would have been better to have used the term "fundamentalism" consistently throughout when referring to this non-liberal theological point of view among Friends.

The second criticism made by Duane Moon is more important with respect to the content of the original presentation. He detects what he believes to be an apologetic attitude toward the personal approach to social issues. He states his conviction that this still remains the central, as well as the most effective, approach to the elimination of social evil. In reply to this, it is my judgment that modern Friends, including Quakers of all theological persuasions, are obsessed with an individualistic approach to religion and life which is inconsistent with both Christian faith and early Quakerism. Friends are not the only victims of this, but because they have always placed such a high premium on the individual, they have more easily succumbed to it than other Christian groups. Although Christian religious experience must always be appropriated by individuals, and in the final analysis every man is individually accountable before God, there is another sense in which the Christian life is a corporate experience. Considering the Old Testament idea of the covenant community, the Hebrew concept of Israel as a chosen people, the Kingdom of God idea in both the Old and New Testament, the biblical conviction about the Lordship of Christ

over all of life, Paul's figure of the Body of Christ, and the concept of the church which developed very early in the Christian era, we are left with a clear impression of the corporate manner with which God deals with man. The Christian church has never held that man works out his salvation in isolation from other men. The Christian community is a *fellowship* of believers and doers of the will of God. It is a corporate experience and witness because all are members of one another in the Body of Christ, his church.

If one turns from the Bible and church history to our contemporary understanding of man through the behavioral sciences, the evidence is equally compelling that we must look upon man not as an isolated individual, but as a member of a community involving interpersonal relationships and responsibilities. Such an interpretation of the nature of man and society lends weight to the religious affirmation that the Gospel is two-dimensional, that it is both personal and social in its implication and application. Moreover, the Christian ethic is both a personal and a social ethic. It is two-dimensional in the sense that man acts as an individual person as well as collectively in certain institutional roles and relationships in society. In these collective relationships of community, business, government, etc., men act corporately to achieve their desired goals. Indeed, it is through human collectives of this type that most of the work of the world goes on. To suggest that such an arrangement is bad is really no help, for this is the way modern society is organized and no one really expects to change it. It is important, therefore, to understand something of the power structure of social and political organization and to accept moral responsibility for appropriate social and political action.

One may hazard a guess that much of the individualistic element in conservative church thought today stems not from our biblical or church heritage but from the influence of the political and social *laissez faire-ism* of classical liberalism. Advocating an adequate social philosophy which recognizes the importance of social and political action is not to regard the personal approach as *passé*. Certainly every man has a responsibility to do all he can in his personal capacity to further the interests of love and justice in society. Moreover, it is obvious that

Friends have been particularly gifted in exercising the personal approach. As Burns Chalmers noted, we have had our John Woolmans who have made a remarkable impact upon history. Although more of us should become John Woolmans in the twentieth century, the fact is that the complexity and enormity of organized modern life makes his approach increasingly difficult and ineffective. By the same token, this fact points up the necessity of working through the corporate relationships and structures of our social institutions to correct injustice and social evil.

It is of significance that contemporary studies of early Quakerism are revealing increasingly the corporate, as opposed to the individualistic, approach characteristic of early Quaker thought and practice. Although this point of view is chiefly conerned with a re-evaluation of the early Quaker view of the church as a gathered community, still it has bearing upon our view of society and our collective responsibility for correcting the evils in it. Certainly the experience of early Friends in this respect has little to say about the power relationships of social and political organization and ways of achieving justice under these circumstances, so here is a whole new area which modern Friends would do well to explore in order to see what contribution they can make to this problem.

Careful scrutiny of the comments by *Edna Hall* may provide the most formidable, though somewhat obscure, analysis of my article. She seems to be chiefly concerned about the use of impersonal terms as "the image of God" and "the light of Christ" to express the God-man relationship. She prefers to use such terms as grace, faith, trust, dependence-in-freedom, election, convenant, and sonship to express the personal and spiritual relationship proper to the biblical and Christian understanding of God and man. Likewise, she takes issue with such terms as light, holiness, righteousness, wisdom, image of God, etc., which imply for her a strictly ethical relationship on the one hand, or a mechanical relationship on the other. She also makes the very interesting observation that the terms which early Friends used, such as the light, were inadequate to express their basic religious presuppositions.

If this is a correct interpretation of Edna Hall, I find myself in close agreement with her. The difference seems to lie in the use of terms which imply one thing to her and another to myself. It is quite possible that the image-of-God symbolism is too impersonal, though the way in which it was used and interpreted in the original article was intended to convey the dynamic, spiritual, God-man relationship which she seems to favor. The use of "fellowship-in-love" and "holy obedience" were also intended to convey the primacy of man's spiritual relationship to God as over against his moral relationship of ethical obligation. The ethical bond and imperative, however, must follow upon man's personal and spiritual relationship to God, which was an emphasis somewhat lacking in Edna Hall's comments. The use of the word "holy" was intended to imply the converse of the "sin relationship" between man and God. Both are relational concepts—the first expressing man's intended relationship with God, while the latter expresses his defiance of God. Moreover, because "will" is central to the biblical understanding of the nature of God, it is imperative that the God-man relationship carry with it the concept of obedience, which is the reason for coupling "obedience" to the idea of "holiness" in order to convey the full meaning and intent of man's responsibility to God. I quite agree that the proper relationship with God is that of sonship, and it may be that such an expression is preferable to the idea of holy obedience. The term used in the Anabaptist tradition, and recently adopted by some Quakers, is that of Christian discipleship, though any such term should never be used legalistically or moralistically so as to supercede the primacy of God's grace in the God-man relationship.

Certainly the original article, the commentaries, and my rejoinder by no means exhaust this discussion of the various Quaker approaches to the doctrine of man. This should be a continuing dialogue for Friends who are concerned that we rethink our estimate of man in the twentieth century.

Contributors

Wilmer A. Cooper, after finishing his early studies at Friends Boarding School, Barnesville, Ohio, took his A.B. degree from Wilmington College, his M.A. degree from Haverford College, the B.D. degree from Yale Divinity School, and the degree of Ph.D. from Vanderbilt University, where he wrote his thesis upon the subject, "Rufus M. Jones and the Contemporary View of Man." He spent four years in C. P. S. camps and has held a variety of positions including seven years as Administrative Secretary of the Friends Committee on National Legislation. Since last year he has held the position of Associate Professor of Religion, Field Representative to Friends, at Earlham College. He is chairman of the Quaker Theological Discussion Group.

Edna M. Hall, a British Friend, has been active for a number of years in educational work. After spending six months at Woodbrooke in 1955, she has lectured in Divinity in Teacher Training Colleges, and is currently on the staff of Maria Grey College, Twickenham. She has recently completed a study of Samuel Fisher and hopes to continue the study of Quaker religious thought in the 17th and 18th centuries. She holds degrees of M.A. and B.D. from the University of Birmingham, and is a member of Kingston Meeting, Surrey.

A. Burns Chalmers, member of Friends Meeting of Washington, is Director of Davis House in Washington, D.C., and Secretary of Education for the American Friends Service Committee. From 1935 until 1947 he was professor of religion and religious director at Smith College; and was, also, for a time a visiting professor at Amherst College. He received degrees from Yale College and Union Theological Seminary in New York, and studied also at New College, Edinburgh, and Oxford University. He served twice as a relief worker for the American Friends Service Committee in France.

Duane Moon attended Friends Bible College, Friends University, and received the A.B. degree from the College of Emporia and later the B.D. degree from Phillips University. A member of the Board of Church Vocations of the Five Years Meeting, he is also chairman of the Evangelistic and Church Extension Committee of Iowa Yearly Meeting. Since 1954 he has served as pastor of the College Avenue Friends Church in Oskaloosa, Iowa, and teaches part-time in William Penn College.

PREVIOUS ISSUES OF

Quaker Religious Thought

Volume 1, Number 1, Spring 1959 — Price 50¢

The Quaker Doctrine of the Holy Spirit — By Howard Brinton

Comments by: Lewis Benson, Thomas S. Brown, and Charles F. Thomas

---

Volume I, Number 2, Autumn 1959 — Price 50¢

The Quaker Interpretation of the Significance of Christ — By Maurice Creasey

Comments by: Harold Walker, Theodor Benfey, and Douglas Steere

---

Volume II, Number 1, Spring 1960 — Price 75¢

The Early Quaker Vision of the Church — By Lewis Benson

Comments by: Henry J. Cadbury, T. Canby Jones, and D. Elton Trueblood

---

printed by

The Hemlock Press

R. D., Alburtis, Pennsylvania